

A  
Notable Discouery of Coosenage.  
*Now daily practised by sundry lewd per-  
sons, called Connie-catchers, and  
Crosse-byters.*

Plainely laying open those pernicious sleights that hath brought many igno-  
rant men to confusion.

*Written for the general benefit of all Gentlemen, Clergymen, Apprentises, Country Farmers  
and yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of such coosening companions.*

*With a delightfull discourse of the coosenage of Colliers.*

Nalcimur pro patria. By R. Greene, Maister of Arts.



LONDON.  
Printed by Iohn Wolfe for T. N. and are to be sold ouer  
against the great South doore of Pauls. 1592.

1910



TO THE YONG GEN-  
tlemen, Marchants, Apprentises,  
Farmers, and plain Countreyemen  
Health.



Iogenes, Gentlemen, from a counterfeit Coi-  
ner of money, became a currant corrector of  
manners, as absolute in the one, as dissolute  
in the other: time refineth mens affects, and  
their humors grow different by the distincti-  
on of age. Poore Ouid that amorously writ in  
his youth the art of loue, complayned in his exile amongst the  
Getes of his wanto follies. And Socrates age was vertuous thogh  
his prime was licentious. So, Gentlemen, my younger yeares had  
uncertaine thoughtes, but now my ripe dayes calls on to repen-  
tant deeds, and I sorrow as much to see others wilfull, as I deligh-  
ted once to be wanton. The odde mad-caps I haue beene mate too,  
not as a companion, but as a spie to haue an insight into their  
knaueries, that seeing their traines I might eschew their snares:  
those mad fellowes I learned at last to loath, by their owne grace-  
lesse villinies, and what I saw in them to their confusion, I can  
forewarn in others to my countries commodity. None could de-  
cipher Tyrannisme better then Arestippus, not that his nature  
was cruell, but that he was noutrured with Dionisius: The sim-  
ple swaine that cuts the Lapidaries stones, can distinguish a Ruby  
from a Diamond onely by his labour: though I haue not practised  
their deceits, yet conuersing by fortune, and talking vppon pur-  
pose with such coper-mates, hath giuen me light into their com-  
ceptes, and I can decipher their qualities, though I vtterly mislike

### To the Reader.

of their practises. To be brieſe Gentlemen, I haue ſeen the world and rounded it, though not with trauell, yet with experience, and I cry out with Salomon. Omnia ſub ſole vanitas. I haue ſmiled with the Italian, and worne the vipers head in my hand, and yet ſtopt his venome. I haue eaten Spaniſhe Mirabolanes, and yet am nothing the more metamorphoſed. Fraunce, Germany, Poland, Denmarke, I knowe them all, yet not affected to any in the ſourme of my life; onely I am Engliſh borne, and I haue Engliſh thoughts, not a diuell incarnate becauſe I am Italianat, but hating the pride of Italy, becauſe I know their pecuiſhnes: yet in all theſe Countries where I haue trauailed, I haue not ſcene more exceſſe of vanity then wee Engliſhe men practiſe through vain glory: for as our wits be as ripe as any, ſo our willes are more ready then they all, to put in effect any of their licentious abuſes: yet amongſt the reſt, letting ordinary ſinnes paſſe, becauſe cuſtome hath almoſt made them a lawe, I will only ſpeake of two ſuch notable abuſes, which the practitioners of the ſhadow with the name of Arts, as neuer haue beene heard of in any age before. The firſt and chiefe, is called the Art of Cunny catching; the ſecond, the Arte of Groſbiting; two ſuch peſtilent and preiudiciall practiſes, as of late haue beene the ruine of infinit perſons, and the ſubuerſion and ouerthrow of many Marchaunts, Farmers, and honeſt minded yeomen. The firſt is a deceite at Cardes, which growing by enormity into a Coofenage, is able to drawe (by the ſubtill ſhew thereof) a man of great iudgement to conſent to his owne conſuſion. Yet Gentlemen when you ſhall reade this booke written faithfully to diſcouer theſe coofening practiſes, thinke I go not about to diſproue or diſalow the moſt auncient and honeſt paſtime or recreation of Card-play, for thus much I know by reading: When the Cittie of Thebes was beſieged by them of Lacedemonia, being girt within ſtrong fenced walles, and hauing men enough, and able to rebat the enimie, they found no inconuenience of force to breede their enſuing bane but famine, in that  
when



## To the Reader.

when victuals waxed scant, hunger would make them eys ther yeeld by a fainting composition, or a miserable death. Whereupon to wearie the foe with wintering at the sledge, the Thebanes deuised this pollicie, they found out the Methode of Cards and Dice, and so busied their braines with the pleasantnesse of that new inuention, passing away the time with strange recreations and pastimes, beguiling hunger with the delight of the new sportes, and eating but euerie third day, and playing two, so their frugall sparing of victuals, kept them from famine, the Citie from sacking, and raised the foe from a mortall sledge. Thus was the vse of Cardes and Dice first inuented, and since amongst Princes highly esteemed and allowed in all common-wealthes, as a necessarie recreation for the minde: but as time and malice of mans nature hatcheth abuse, so good thinges by ill wittes are wrested to the worse, and so in Cardes: for from an honest recreation, it is growne to a preiudiciall practise, and most high degree of coosenage, as shall be discovered in my Arte of Cunny-catching, for not onely simple swaines whose wittes is in their handes, but yong Gentlemen and Marchants, are all caught like Cunnies in the bay, and so led like lambes to their confusion.

The poore man that commeth to the Tearme to trie his right, and laieth his land to morgadge to get some Crownes in hys purse to see his Lawyer, is drawne in by these deuilish Cunny-catchers that at one cut at Cardes loofeth all his money, by which meanes, he, his wife and children, is brought to vitter ruine and misery. The poore Prentice whose honest minde aymeth onely at his Maisters profites, by these pestilent vipers of the common-wealth is smoothly intised to the hazard of this game at Cardes, and robd of his Maisters money, which forceth him oft times eyther to run away, or banckrout all, to the ouerthrow of some honest and wealthy Cittizen. Seeing then such a dangerous enormity groweth by them to the discredit of the estate of England, I would wishe the Iustices appointed as seuerer Censors of such fatall mischiefs,

## To the Reader.

chiefs, to shewe themselves patres patriæ, by weeding out such worms as eat away the sappe of the Tree, and rooting this base degree of Cooseners out of so peaceable and prosperous a countrey, for of al diuclish practises this is the most preiudicial. The high Lawyer that challengeth a purse by the high way side, the foist, the nip, the stale, the snap, I meane the picke-pockets and cut-purses are nothing so dangerous to meete with all, as these Coosening Cunny-catchers. The Chetors that with their false Dice make a hand, & strike in at Hazard or Passage with their Dice of aduantage, are nothing so dangerous as these baseminded Caterpillers. For they haue their vies and there remedies vppon the poore Cunnies backe, til they so ferrette beate him that they leaue him neither haire on his skin, nor hole to harbour in. There was before this many yeares ago, a practise put in vse by such shifting companions, which was called the Barnards Law, wherein as in the Art of Cunny-catching, four persons were required to performe their coosning commodity. The Taker up, the Verfer, the Barnard and the Ruster, and the manner of it in deed was thus. The Taker up seemeth a skilful man in al things, who hath by long trauail learned without Booke a thousand pollicies to insinuate himselfe into a mans acquaintance: Talke of matters in law, he hath plenty of Calis at his fingers ends, and he hath scene, and tried, and ruled in the Kinges Courts: Speake of grasing and husbandry, no man knoweth more shires then hee, nor better which way to raise a gainefull commodity, and how the abuses and ouerture of prices might bee redressed. Finally, enter into what discourse they list, were it into a Broomemans faculty, hee knoweth what gaynes they haue for olde Bootes and Shoes: Tea, and it shall scape him hardly, but that ere your talke break off, hee will be your Countrey man at least, and peradventure cyther of kinne, aly, or some stale sib to you, if your reach far surmonni not his. In case hee bring to passe that you bee glad of his acquaintance, then doth hee carry you to the Taucrnes, and with him goes the Verfer a man

of

## To the Reader.

of more worſhippe then the Taker vp, and hee hath the countenance of a landed man. As they are ſet, comes in the Barnard ſtombling into your company, like ſome aged Farmer of the Countrey, a ſtranger vnto you all, that had bene at ſome market Towne there abouts buying and ſelling, and there tiple ſo much Malmesie that hee had neuer a ready word in his mouth, and is ſo careleſſe of his money, that out hee throweth ſome forty Angels on the boords end, and ſtanding ſomewhat aloofe, calleth for a pint of wine, and ſayth: Maſters, I am ſomewhat bolde with you, I pray you be not greeued if I drinke my drinke by you: and thus miniſters ſuch idle drunken talke, that the Verſer who counterfeiteth the landed man comes and drawes more neare to the plaine honeſt dealing man, and prayeth him to call the Barnard more neare to laugh at his folly. Betweene them two the matter ſhal be ſo workemanly conueied and finely argued, that out cometh an old paye of Cardes, whereat the Barnard teacheth the Verſer a new game, that hee ſaies coſt him for the learning two pots of Ale not two houres agoe, the firſt wager is drinke, the next two pence or a groat, and laſtly to be briefe they uſe the matter ſo, that hee that were a hundred yeare olde, and neuer played in his life for a peny, cannot reſuſe to be the Verſers halfe, and conſequently at one game at Cardes, hee looſeth at they play for hee is a hundred pound. And if perhaps when the money is loſt (to uſe their word of Arte) the poore countrey man begin to ſmoake them, and ſweares the drunken knaue ſhall not get his money ſo, then ſtandeth the Rutter at the doore and draweth his ſword and picketh a quarrell at his owne ſhadowe, if hee lacke an Oſter or a Tapſter or ſome other to brabble with, that while the ſtreete and company gather to the fray, as the manner is, the Barnard ſteales away with all the coine, and gets him to one blinde Tanneer or other, where theſe Coofeners had appointed to meete.

Thus Gentlemen I haue glaunſt at the Barnardes Lawe, which though you may perceyue is to bee a preiudiciall inſinuating

## To the Reader.

ting coosenage, yet is the Art of Cunny-catching so farre beyond it in subtilty, as the diuel is more dishonest then the holiest Angell: for so unlikely is it for the poore Cunny to leese, that might he pawn his stake to a pound, he would lay it that he cannot be crof-bitten in the cut at Cardes; as you shall perceiue by my present discovery. Yet gentlemen, am I sore threatned by the backsters of that filthy faculty, that if I sette their practises in Print, they will cut off that hand that writes the Pamphlet, but howe I feare their brauadoes, you shall perceiue by my plaine painting out of them, yea, so litte doe I esteem such base minded braggards, that were it not I hope of their amendement, I would in a schedule set down the names of such coosening Cunny-catchers. Well leaning them and there course of life to the honourable and the worshipfull of the land to be censors of with Iustice, haue about for a blowe at the Arte of Crof-biting: I meane not crof-biters at dice, when the Chetor with a langret, cut contrarie to the vantage, wil crof-bite a bard cater tray: nor I meane not when a broking knaue crof-bites a Gentleman with a bad commoditie: nor when the Foist, the picke-pockets (sir reuerence I meane) is crof-bitten by the Snap, and so smoaks for his purchase: nor when the nip, which the common people call a Cut-purse, hath a crof-bite by some bribing officer, who threatning to carrie him to prison, takes awaie all the monie and lets him slip without anie punishment: But I meane a more disbonourable Art, when a base rogue, cyther keepeth a whore as his friend, or marries one to be his maintainer, and with her not onely crof-bites men of good calling, but especially poore ignorant countrey Farmers, who God wotte be by them led like sheepe to the slaughter. Thus gentle readers, haue I giuen you a light in bruse, what I meane to prosecute at large, and so with an humble sute to all Iustices, that they will seeke to roote out these two rogish Artes, I commit you to the Almighty.

Yours Rob. Greene.

# THE ART OF CON- ny-catching.



**T**here be requisite effectually to att the  
Art of Conny-catching three severall  
parties: the Setter, the Werser, and  
the Warrackie. The nature of the set-  
ter is to draw in any person familiare  
ly to drinke with him, which person  
they call the Conie, and their methods  
is according to the man they aime at:  
if a Gentleman, Merchant, or Apprentice, the Connie is the  
more easely caught, in that they are some induced to play,  
and therfor: I omit the circumstance they vse in catching of  
them. And for because the poore Country Farmer, or Poor  
man is the mark they most aime at, who they know comes  
not

### *The Art of Conny-catching.*

not emptie to the Terme, I will discover the meanes they put in practise to bring in some honest, simple, and ignorant men to their purpose. The Conny-catchers, apparelled like honest civil Gentlemen, or good fellows, with a smooth face, as if butter would not melt in their mouthes, after dinner when the Clergys are come from Westminster hal, and are somewhat at leisure to walke by and downe Paules, Fleet-Street, Holburne, the Strand, and such common haunted places, where these cozening companions attend onely to spie out a pray: who, as soon as they see a plaine country fellowe wel and cleanly apparelled, either in a coate of home spunne russet, or of fraye as the time requires, and a fide pouch at his side, there is a Connie saith one. At that worde out flies the Setter, and over-taking the man, begins to salute him thus. Sir, God save you, you are hartly welcom to London, he w doth all our good frends in the country? I hope they bee all in health. The country-man seeing a man so courteous that he knowes not, halfe in a browne studie at this strange salutation, perhaps makes him this answer: Sir, all our frends in the cuntry are well thanks be to God, but truly I know you not, you must pardon me. Why sir, saith the Setter, getting by his tong what cuntryman he is, are you not a Yorkshire man, or such a cuntryman? if he say yes, then he creeps vpon him cloiely; if he say no, then straight the Setter comes o-uer him thus: In god soth sir, I know you by your face, and haue bene in your companie befoze, I pray you (if without offence) let me crane your name, and the place of your abode. The simple man straight telles him where hee dwels, his name, and who be his next neighbors, and what Gentlemen dwell about him. After hee hath learned all of him, then hee comes ouer his shaloties kindly: Sir, though I haue bene somewhat bold to be inquisitiue of your name: yet hold me excused, for I took you for a friend of mine; but since by mistaking I haue made you slacke your busines, wele drink a quart of wine, or a pot of Ale together: If the gentle soles be so ready as to goe, then the Connie is caught: but if hee

arriueth

smacks



smack the better, and smells a rat by his clawing, and will not drinke with him, then away goes the better, & discourseth to the Clerke the name of the man, the parish he dwells in, and what Gentlemen are his neare neighbours, with that away goes he, and crossing the man, at some turning mates him full in the face, and grates him thus.

What godman Barton? how fares all our friends about you? you are wel met, I haue a pint of wine for you, you are welcome to Towne. The plaine country-man hearing himselfe named by a man he knowes not, marvels and answers him that he knowes him not, and craues pardon: Not mee godman Barton? haue you forgot mee? Why I am such a mans kinsman your neighbour not farre off: how doth this o: that god Gentleman my friend? god Lorde that I should bee out of your remembrance, I haue bene at your house diuers times. Indeed sir, saith the farmer, are you such a mans kinsman? Surely sir, if you had not challenge acquaintance of me, I should neuer haue knowne you, I haue clean forgot you, but I know the god Gentleman your Cousen well, hee is my very god neighbour: and for his sake saith the Clerke, wele drinke afoze we part: happely the man thanks him, & to the wine o: ale they go, then ere they part they make him a Cony, and so ferret-claw him at cards, that they leaue him as bare of mony, as an ape of a taile. Thus haue these filthie fellows their subtil fetches to draw on poore men to fall into their coosening practises: thus like consuming motter of the common-wealth, they pray vpon the ignorance of such plaine soules, as measure all by their owne honestie: not regarding either conscience. o: the satall reuenge that is threatened for such idle and licentious persons: but doe imploy all their wits to ouerthrow of such, as with their handy thrift satisfie their bawty thirst: they preferring coosnage before labour, and chusing an idle practise before any honest forme of good liuing. Wel to the methode againe of taking vp their Connies: If the poore cuntry-man linoake them still, and will not stoupe vnto either of their lures: then one, either



### *The Art of Conny-catching.*

the Thierfer, or the better, or some of their crew (so there is a generall fraternitie betwixt them) they goe before the Conny as he goeth, and letteth droppe twelue pence in the high way, that of force the Conny must see it. The Country-man spying the shilling, maketh not daintie (so Quis mihi mentis inops oblatum respuit aurum?) but stoopeth very mannerly, & taketh it vp: then one of the Conny-catchers behind cryeth halfe part and so chalengeth halfe of the finding. The country-man content offereth to chaunge the money: Nay saith friend, saith the Thierfer, tis ill lucke to kepe sound money, wele goe spend it in a pottle of wine, or in a breakfast, dinner or supper, as the time of the day requires: If the Conny say he wil not, then answers the Thierfer, spend my part: If still the Conny refuse, he taketh halfe and away: If they spie the country-man to be of a hauning and courteous humour, then haue they a further policie to drawe him on: an other that knoweth the place of his abode, maketh him, and sayth, Sir, well met, I haue runne hastily to overtake you I pray you dwell you not in Darby-shire in such a village? yes marie do I friend, saith the Conny: then replies the Thierfer, truely sir, I haue a sute vnto you, I am going out of towne, and must sende a letter to the parson of your parish, you shall not refuse to do a stranger such a faine: as to carry it him, happen as men may in time mete, it may lie in my lot to doe you as good a turne, & sir for your paines I will giue you twelue pence. The poore Conny in more simplicitie saith, sir, I will do so much for you with all my heart, where is your letter? I haue it not (good sir) readie written, but may I intreate you to stepp into some Tauerne, or Ale-house, wele d,inke the while, and I will write but a line or two: at this the Conny stoupes, and for greedines of the money, and vpon kinde curtosie goes with the Letter vnto the Tauerne. As they walke they meet the Thierfer, and then they all thre goe into the Tauerne together.

& Gentlemen, what great Logicians these Conny-catchers bee, that haue such & rhetoricall persuasions to induce the

the poore country-man to his confusion, and what varietie of villanie they haue to stripp the honest farmer of his money. Well, imagine the Connie is in the Tauerne, then sits downe the Werser, and saith to the Better, What Sirs, wilt thou giue mee a quart of wine, as shall I giue thee one? Wele drinke a pint, saith the Better, but wele play a game at cardes for it, respecting more the sport then the losse: content (saith the Werser) go call for a paire: and while he is gone to fetch the, he saith to the Conny, you shall see me fetch over my yong maister for a quart of wine finely, but this you must doe for me: when I cut the Cardes, as I wil not cut aboue five off, marke then of all the great packe which is vndermost, and when I bid you call a card for mee, name that, and you shall see wele make him pay for a quart of wine straight. Truly saith the Conny, I am no great player at Cardes, and I doe not wel vnderstand your meaning. Why saith he, it is thus: I will play at mum-chance, as decoy, that hee shall shuffle the Cardes, and I will cutte: now eithor of vs must call a Card you shall call for mee, and hee for himse: so, and whose Card comes first wins: therfore when I haue cut the cards, then make the nethermost of the greatest heape, that I set vpon the cards which I cut off, and alwaies cal that for me. Wh now saith the Connie, I vnderstand you, let me alone, I warrant Ile sit your turne: with that, in comes the Better with his Cardes, and asketh at what game they shall play, why saith the Werser, at a newe game called mum-chance, that hath no policie nor knauey, but p'ains as a pike staffe, you shall shuffle, and Ile cut, you shall call a Card, and this honest man a straunger almost to vs both, shall call another for me, and which of our cards comes first shall win. Content saith the Better, for this is but mere hazard, and so he shuffles the cards, and the Werser cuts off some foure cards, and then taking vp the heape to set vpon them, giueth the Connie a glance of the bottom card of that heap, then saith, & now Sir call for mee. The Connie to blind the Better's eyes, asketh as though he were not made priuie to the game, what shall I

*The Art of Conny-catching.*

cut? what card saith the Werler? why, what you will, either hart, spade, club, or diamond, coat-card, or other. Wh is it so saith the Conmie? why then you shal haue the foure of harts, which was the card he had the glance of, and saith the Werter (holding the cardes in his hand, and turning vp the vppermost card as though he knew not wel the game) He haue the knaue of trumps. Nay saith the Werler, there is no trump, you may call what card you will, then saith hee, He haue the ten of spades, with that he dyaues, and the foure of harts comes first: well saith the Werter, tis but hazard, mine might haue come as wel as yours, sine is vp, I feare not the set: so they shuffle and cut, but the Werler winnes. Well saith the Werter, no better will cleane on my bread, what not one draught amongst sixe: Dyaue a freshe pint, He haue another bout with you: but sir, I velleur (saith he to the Conny) you see some card, that it goes so crooke on my side: I saith the Conmie, nay I hope you thinke not so of me, tis but hazard and chance: so I am but a meere stranger vnto the game, as I am an honest man I neuer saw it before.

Thus this simple Conmie closeth vp smoothly to take the Werlers part, onely for greedinesse to haue him win the wine: Well, answeres the Werter, then He haue one call more, and so it they go, but he loseth all, and beginneth to chafe in this manner: Where it not quoth he, that I care not for a quart of Wine, I could sweare as many othes for anger, as there be haire on my head: why shoulde not my lucke be as good as yours, and fortune fauour me as well as you? what, not one cald card in tenne cuttes? He for sweare the game for euer. What, chafe not man (saith the Werler) seeing we haue your quart of Wine, He shew you the game, and with that discourseth al to him, as if he knew it not. The Werter, as simply as if the knaue were ignorant, saith: I marrie, I thinke so, you must needes winne, when he knowes what card to call, I might haue plaid long enough before I had got a set. Truly saith the Conmie, tis a pretty game, so tis not possible for a man to lose that cutteth the

the cardes: I warrant the other that shuffles may loose  
Saint Peters coape if hee had it. Well, He carie this booke  
with mee into the country, and win many a pot of ale with  
it. A fresh pint saith the Werser, and then wele away: but  
seeing sir you are going homeward, He learne you a tricks  
worth the noting, that you shall win manie a pot with in the  
winter nights: with that he culls out the foure knaves, and  
pricks one in the toppes, one in the middell, and one in the  
bottom. Now sir saith hee, you see these thre knaves appa-  
rantly, thrust them downe with your hand, and cutte where  
you will, and though they bee so far asunder, He make them  
all come together. I pray you lets see that trick saith the  
Connie, mee thinkes it should be impossible. So the Werser  
dyaues, & all the thre knaves come in one heap: this he doth  
once o:twise, that the Connie wonders at it, and offers him  
a pint of wine to teache it him. Nay saith the Werser, He do  
it so: thanks, & therefore marke me where you haue taken  
out the four knaves, lay two together aboue, & dyawt vp one  
of them that it may be seene, then pick the other in the mid-  
dell, & the thirde in the bottom, so when any cuts, cut he neuer  
so warily, thre knaves must of sores come together: so the  
bottom knave is cut to by upon both the vpper knaves. I  
marry saith the Better, but then the thre knaves you the two  
comes not together. Truth saith the Werser, but one among  
a thousand makes not that: it requires a quicke eie, a sharpe  
wit, and a reaching hand to spie at the first. Now gramercy  
sir for this trick saith the Connie. He dominere with this  
amongst my neighbors. Thus doth the Werser & the Better  
seigne a kind frendship to the Cony, offering him no shew of  
cosenage, no: once to dyawt him in for a pint of wine, the  
more to shadow their intended villeney, but now begins the  
spoyt: as thus they sit tipping, comes the Barnackie & thrusts  
open the doze, looking into the rowe where they are, and as  
one bashfull steps backe again: and very mannerly saith: I  
cry you mercy Gentlemen, I thought a frend of mine had bin  
here, I pray you pardon my boldness. So harme sir saith

*The Art of Conny-catching.*

the Werler, I pray you drinke a cuppe of wine with vs and welcom: so in comes the Barnackie, & taking the cup drinks to the Connie, & then saith, what at cards Gentlemen? were it not I should bee offensive to the company, I would play for a pint till my friend come that I looke for. Why sir, saith the Werler, if you will sit downe you shall bee taken vp for a quart of wine. With all my hart, saith the Barnackie, what will you play at? at Primero, or uno vizzo, Bannt, one and thirtie, new cut, or what shall bee the game? Sir saith the Werler, I am but an ignorant man at cards, and I see you haue them at your fingers end, Ile play with you at a game wherein can be no deceit, it is called mum-chance at cards, and it is thus: you shall shuffle the cards, and I wil cut, you shall call one, and this plaine honest country yeoman shall call a card for mee, and which of our cardes comes first shall winne: here you see is no deceit, and at this Ile play. Most truly saith the Connie, me thinks there can be no great craft in this: well saith the Barnackie, for a pint of wine haue at you: so they play as befoze, sue vp, and the Werler winnes. This is hard luck, saith the Barnackie, and I beleue the honest man spies some card in the botto me, and therefore I will make this alwaies to picke the bottom card: content saith the Werler, and the Connie to cloke the matter saith, for you offer me iniurie to thinke that I can see a card, when I neyther touch them, shuffle, cut, nor draw them: Ah sir saith the Barnackie, give losers leave to speake: whether they goe againe, and then the Barnackie knowing the game better then they all, by chopping a card winnes two of the five, but lets the Werler win the set, then in a chafe bee sweareth that but his ill lucke, and he can see no deceit at it, and therefore he will play twelue pence a cut. The Werler is content, & winnes two or thre shillings of the Barnackie, whereat he chafes, and saith, I came hither in an evil houre: but I will winne my money againe, or lose all in my purse, With that he draws out a purse with some thre or foure pound, and claps it on the board: the Werler asketh the Connie secretly by signe

if hee will be his halfe, he sales J. and straight feesles fo: his purse: wel t he Barnacle shuffles the Cardes thoughtly, and the Werfer cuts as befoze, the Barnacle whē he hath dyatw one Carde saith, ile eyther winne something o: lose something, therefore ile vie and reuie enery Card at my pleasure, till eyther yours o: mine come out, and therefore twelue pence vpo this Card, my Card comes first fo: twelue pence: no saith the Werfer, J sayth the Conny, and J durst holde twelue pence moze, why, J holde you saith the Barnacle, and so they vie and reuie till some tenne shillings bee on the stake: and then next comes fo:th the Werfers Carde, that the Conny called, and so the Barnacle loofeth: well, this fleshty the Conny, the swartnesse of gaine maketh him frolicke, and no man is moze ready to vie and reuie than hee. Thus fo: thre o: foure times the Barnacle lofeth, at last to whet on the Conny, he striketh his chopt Card and winneth a good stake. A way with the witch creyes the Barnacle, J hope the Cardes will turne at last. J much, thinketh the Conny, twas but a chaunce that you as hit so right, to aske one of the fine that was cutte off, J am sure there was so:ty so one on my side, and ile haue you on the lurch by and by, so still they vie and reuie, and fo: once that the Barnacle winnes, the Conny gets sue, at last when they mean to shawe the Conny cleane of all his coine. the Barnacle chafeth, and vpon a palour bozroiweth some money of the Tapster, and swears hee will vie it to the vttermost, then thus he chops his Card to cros-bite the Conny, hee first looke on the bottome Card, and shuffles often, but still keeping that bottome Card, which hee knowes to bee vppermost, then sets he downe the Cardes, and the Werfer to encourage the Conny, cuts off but thre Cardes, wherof the Barnacles Card must needes bee the vppermost, then shewes he the bottome Card of the other heape cut off to the Conny, and sets it vpon the Barnacles Card which he knowes, so that of fo:ce, the Card that was layd vppermost, must come fo:th first: and then the Barnacle calles that Card: they dyatw a Card, and then the

C.

Bar.



### *The Art of Conny-catching.*

Barnacke vies, and the Countrey man vies hypon him : for this is the Law, as often as one vies or reuies the other must see it or els hee looseth the stake : Well at last the Barnacke plyes it so, that perppasses hee has moze money then the Conny hath in hys purse : The Conny byon thys, knowing hys Card is the third or fourth Card, and that hee hath so; tie to one against the Barnacke, paynes his rings if he hath any, hys sworde, his cloake, or els what hee hath about him, to maintaine the vie, and when hee laughes in his secue thinking he hath sleest the Barnacke of all, then the Barnackes Card comes forth, and strikes such a cold humour to hys heart, that hee sittes as a man in a traunce, not knowing what to doe, and sighing while his heart is ready to breake, thinking on the money that he hath lost. Perhaps the man is very simple and patient, and whatsoeuer he thinks, for feare goes his way quiet with his losse, while the Conny-catchers laugh and deuide the spoyle, and beeing out of doozes, poze man, goeth to hys lodging with a heauie heart & watry eyes, pensue & sorrowfull, but too late, for perhaps the mans state did depend on that money, and so hee, his wife, hys children, and hys family are brought to extreame misery. An other perhaps moze hardy and subtile, smoakes the Conny-catchers and sinelleth coosenage, & sayes, they shal not haue his money so, but they aunswer him with byanes, and though hee bying them befoze an Officer, yet the knaues are so fauoured, that the man neuer recouers his money, and yet he is let slip without punishment. Thus are the poze Connies robbed by these base minded Caterpillers : Thus are seruing-men oft inticed to play and loose all : Thus are prentices induced to be Connies, and so are coolsed of their Maisters money, yea young Gentlemen, Merchants and others, are fetcht in by these damnable rake-helles, a plague as ill as hell, which is present losse of money and ensuing misery. A lamentable case in England, when such vipers are suffered to breede, and are not cut off with the sworde of Justice. This enomytie is not onely in London, but nowe generally disperfed through all England



England in euery shyre Cittie and Towne of any receipt, & many complaints are hearde of their egregious coosenage: The poore Farmer simply going about his businesse, or to his Attourneys chamber, is caught vp & coofed of all: The Seruing-man sent with his Loydes treasure, loofeth oft times most part, to these woorms of the common wealth. The Whentice hauing his Maisters money in charge, is spoiled by them, and from an honest seruauant eyther diuinen to run away, or to liue in discredite for euer. The Gentleman loofeth his land, the Merchant his stocke, and all to these abominable Conny-catchers, whose meanes is as ill as they liuing, for they are all eyther wedded to Whozes, or so addicted to Whozes, that what they get from honest men, they spend in bandy houses amongst Harlots, and consume it as vainely as they get it villainously. They care are of Adamant, as pittilesse as they are trecherous, for be the man neuer so poore, they will not returne him one penny of his losse. I remember a merry iest done of late to a Welch-man, who being a mere stranger in London, and not well acquainted with the English tongue, yet chaunst amongst certayne Conny-catchers, who spying the Gentle-man to haue money, they so dealt wyth hym, that what by signes and broken English, they got him in for a Conny, and steelt him of euery penny that he had, and of his sword. At last the man smoakt them, and dyed his dagger vpon them at Ludgate, for there abouts they had catcht him, and would haue stabbe one of them for his money, people came and stopt hym, and the rather because they coulde not vnderstande him, although he had a Card in one hand, and his dagger in the other, and sayd as well as he coulde, a Carde a Carde Mon dieu, in the meane whyle the Conny-catchers were gotten in to Panles, and so away: The Welch man followed them, & sought them there, and went vp and doونه the Church steele with his naked dagger and the Card in his hande, & the Gentlemen meruailed what he meant thereby: at last one of his country men met him, and enquired the cause of his choller, & then he told him

### *The Art of Conny-catching.*

him howe he was coofoned at Cardes and robbed of all his money, but as his losse was voluntary, so his seeking them was mere vanity, for they were slept into some blinde Ale-house to deuide the shares. Neere to Sainct Edmundes Bury in Suffolke, there dwelt an honest man a Shoemaker, that hauing some twenty Parkes in his purse long gathered and neerely kept, came to the Market to buy a Dicker of hydes, and by chaunce fell amongst Conny-catchers: whose names I omitte, because I hope of theyr amendement. This plaine countrey man, dyatw in by these former deuises, was made a Conny, and so straight stript of all his twenty marke to his utter vndoing: the knanes scapt, and hee went home a sorrowfull man: Shortly after one of these Conny-catchers was taken for a suspected person, and layde in Bury Gaole, the Sessions comming, and hee produced to the Bar, it was the fortune of this pooze Shoemaker to be there, who espying this Rogue to bee arraigned, was glad, and said nothing vnto hym, but lookt what woulde bee the issue of his arraunce: at the last hee was brought befoze the Iustices, where hee was examined of his lyfe, and being demanded what Occupation he was, sayde none, what profession then are you of, and how liue you: Parry quoth he I am a Gentleman and liue of my freendes: say that is a lye quoth the pooze Shoemaker, vnder correction of the worshipfull of the bench, you haue a trade, and are by your Arte a Conny-catcher: A Conny-catcher, sayd one of the Iustices, and smiled, what is he a warriner fellow: whose warrain doth he keepe canst thou tel: say sir, your worship mistaketh me, quoth the Shoemaker, he is not a warrainer but a Conny-catcher: the bench that neuer heard this name befoze smile, and attributed the name to the mans simplicity, thinking he ment a warrainer: which the Shoemaker espying, made answer, that some Connies this fellow catcht, were worth twenty Parkes a peece, and for woole, quoth hee, I am one of them, and so discoursed the whole order of the Arte, and the basenes of the coofoning: wherupon the Iustices looking into his life, appoin-  
ted

ted him to be whipt, & the Schoemaker desired hee might gve him his paiment, which was granted: so whē he came to his punishment, the Schoemaker laught and said, tis a mad worlde when pooze Connies are able to beate their Conny-catchers, but he lent him so freendly lathes, that almost hee made him pay an ounce of blood for every pound of silver. Thus wee see how the generation of these vipers increaseth, to the confusion of many honest men, whose practises to my pooze power I have discovered, and set out with their villainous sleights that they use to the intrapping of the simple, yet haue they cloakes for the raine, & shadowes for their villainies, calling it by the name of Art or Lawe, as Conny-catching Arte, or Conny-catching Law. And hereof it riseth, that like as Lawe when the tearme is truly considered, signifieth an ordinance of good men established for the Common wealth, to repress all vicious living, so these Conny-catchers turne the Catte in the panne, giuing to diuers wilde patching Shifts, an honest and godly title, calling it by the name of a Lawe, because by a multitude of hatefull rules (as it were in good learning) they exercise their villainies to the destruction of sundry honest people. Thus and hereupon doe they giue their false conueyance, the name of Conny-catching Law, as there be also other Lawes, as High Law, Backing Law, Figging Law, Cheting Lawe, Barnards Lawe. If you meruaile at these miseries and quaint words, consider as the Carpenter hath many tearmes familiar enough to his pzentises, that others vnderstand not at all, so haue the Conny-catchers not without great cause: for a fallshoode once detected can neuer compass the desired effect. Therefore will I presently acquaint you with the signification of the tearmes in a Table. But leauing them til time & place, comming downe the other day Turnmil Street, I met with one whom I suspected a Conny-catcher, & in deed mist not of my mark: after salutations & some chat, I dr̄w him on to the Tauerne, & there after a cup of wine or two, I began to treat with him of the manner of his life, & told him I was sorry for his friends sake that he took so

### *The Art of Conny-catching.*

had a course, as to live upon the spoyle of poore men, and especially to deserue the name of Conny-catching, vsuallading hym from that base kinde of life, that was so ignominious in the world, and so lothsome in the sight of G D D. But Sir, quoth he, calling mee by my name, as my Religion is small, so my deuotion is lesse, I leaue G D D to be disputed on by Diuines: The two ends I aime at, is gaine and ease, but by what honest meanes I may get, neuer comes within the compasse of my thoughts. Though your experience in traualle be great, yet in home matters mine is moze, yea, I am sure you are not so ignozant, but you know that few men can live byrightly, vnlesse hee haue some pretty way (moze then the world is witnesse to) to helpe hymselfe withall: Thinke you some Lawyers coulde be such purchasers, if all theyr Pleas were shorte, and theyr proceedings Justice and conscience? That Officers woulde be so deere bought and the buyers so soone enriched, if they counted not pillage an honest kinde of purchase? Or doe you thinke that men of hand by trades, doe make all their commodities without falshood, when so many of them are become daily purchasers? Nay, what will you moze, who so hath not some finisser way to helpe hymselfe, but followeth hys nose alwaies straight forwarde, may well holde vp the head for a yeere or two, but the thirde he must needs strike, and gather the wind into beggers hauen. Therefore Sir cease to perswade me to the contrary, for my resolution is to beate my wits, and spare not to busie all my bzaines to saue and helpe me, by what meanes soeuer I care not, so I may auoyd the danger of the Lawe. Wherevpon, seeing thys Conny-catcher resolved in hys sojme of lyfe, leauing hym to his lewdnesse, I went my wayes, wondering at the basenes of theyr minds, that would spend theyr time in such detestable sozt. But no mervails, for they are giuen vp into a reprobate sence, and are in religion meere Atheists, as they are in trade flat dissemblers. If I shoulde spend many sheetes in decyphing theyr shylts, it were fruitelous, in that they be many and are full of variety, for every day

day they inuent newe trickes and such quaint deuises, as are secret and yet passing dangerous, that if a man had Argus eyes, he could scarcely pry into the bottome of their prauises. Thus for the benifite of my countrey, I haue briefly discovered the Lawe of Conny-catching, desiring all Iustices, if such coosoners light in their p̄cinct, euen to vse summmus Ius against them, because it is the basest of all villanies. And that London Prentises if they chaunce in such Conny-catchers company, may teach them London Lawe, that is, to defend the poore men that are wronged, and learn the Caterpillers the high way to New-gate, where if Hinde fauour them with the heaviest Irons in all the house, & giue them his unkindest entertainment, no doubt his other pettie stinnes shalbe halfe pardoned for his labour. But I would it might bee their fortune to happen into Nobles Northward in white Chappell, there in faith round Robin his Deputie woulde make them (like wretches) feele the waite of his beauiest fetters. And so desiring both honorable and woorthipful, as well Iustices as other officers, and all estates from the Prince to the beggar, to rest professed enemies to these baseminded Conny-catchers. I take my leaue.

Nascimur pro patria.

A Table of the words of art, vsed in the effecting these  
*base villanies.*

Wherein is discovered the nature of euery terme, beeing  
*proper to none but to the professors thereof.*

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. High Law.           | Robbing by the high way side.                 |
| 2. Sacking Law.        | Lechery.                                      |
| 3. Chesting Law.       | Play at false Dice.                           |
| 4. Crof-biting Law.    | Coosenage by whores.                          |
| 5. Conny-catching Law. | Coosenage by Cardes.                          |
| 6. Clerking Law.       | Coosenage by false gold.                      |
| 7. Figging Law.        | Cutting of purses,<br>and picking of pockets. |
| 8. Barnards Law.       | A drunken coosenage by cards.                 |

These

## The Art of Conny-catching.

These are the eyght Lawes of villanie leading the high way  
to infamie.

- In high Law. { The Thiefe is called a High Lawyer,  
He that setteth the Watch, a Scripper,  
He that standeth to watch, an Oake,  
He that is robd, the Martin,  
When he yeeldeth, Stouping,
- In Sacking Law. { The Bawde if it be a woman, a Pandar,  
The Bawde if a man, an Apple-squire,  
The Whore, a Commodity,  
The Whorchouse, a Trugging place,
- In Cheting Law. { Pardon mee Gentlemen, for although no man could  
better then my selfe discover this Law & his tearmes,  
and the name of their Cheates, Bard-dice, Flattes,  
Forgers, Langnets, Gourds, Demies, and many o-  
thers, with theyr nature, and the crosses and contra-  
ries to them vppon aduantage, yet for some speciall  
reasons, heerein I will be silent.
- In Crof-biting Law. { The Whore, the Traffique,  
The man that is brought in, the Simpler,  
The villaines that take them, the Crof-biters,
- In Conny-catching Law. { The party that taketh vp the Conny, the Setter,  
He that playeth the game, the Verser,  
He that is coofened, the Conny,  
He that comes in to them, the Barnackle,  
The money that is wonne, Purchase.
- In Versing Law. { He that bringeth him in, the Verser,  
The poore Countrey man, the Coofin,  
And the drunkard that comes in, the Suffer,
- In Figging Law. { The Cutte purse, a Nippe,  
He that is halfe with him, the Snappe,  
The knise, a Cuttle boung,  
The picke pocket, a Foist,  
He that faceth the man, the Stale,  
Taking the Purse, Drawing,  
Spying of him, Smoaking,  
The Purse, the Bong,  
The money, the Shelles,  
The Act doing, Striking,
- In Barnards Law. { He that fetcheth in the man, the Taker,  
He that is taken, the Coofin,  
The landed man, the Verser,  
The drunken man, the Barnard,  
And he that makes the Fray, the Rutter.

Cum multis alijs quæ nunc præscribere longum est.

These



7

*The Art of Croff-biting.*

These quaint tearmes do these base arts vse to shadowe  
their villanie withall, for, *Multa latent quae non patent*, ob-  
scuring their filthie craftes with these faire colours, that  
the ignorant may not espie what their subtiltie is: but  
their end will be like their beginning, hatcht with Cain,  
and consumed with Judas: and so bidding them adue to  
the deuill, and you farewell to God, I end. And now to  
the arte of Crof-biting.

The Art of Crof-biting.

**T**he Crof-biting law, is a publike profection of shame-  
les colnage, mixed with incestuous whozedomes, as il-  
as was practised in Gomorrah: Whom, though not after  
the same vnnaturall maner: for the meibod of their mis-  
chituous art (with blushing cheeks & trembling hart let it  
be spoken) is, that these vilanous vipers, vnder the  
name of men base rogues (yet why doe I tearme them so  
well) being outcasts from God, vipers of the world, & an  
errrementall reuerfion of sin, both consent, may constrain  
their wiues to yeeld the vse of their bodies to other men,  
that taking them together, he may crof-bite the partie of  
all the crownes he presently can make: & that the world  
may see their monstrous practises, I will briefly set down  
the manner.

They haue sundrie praies that they call simplers, which  
are men fondly and wantonly giuen, whom for a penalty  
of their lust, they fleece off all y<sup>e</sup> ener they haue: some mer-  
chants, prentises, seruingmen, gentlemen, yeomen, far-  
mers, and all degrees, and this is their forme: There are  
resident in London & the suburbs, certain men attired like  
Gentlemen, haue fellows, but basely minded, who lining  
in want, as their last refuge, fall vnto this crof-biting law,  
and to maintain themselves, either marry with some stale  
whoze, or els forsooth keep one as their friend: & these per-  
sons be commonly men of the eight lawes before rehearsed  
either high Lawyers, Clergers, Pimps, Conny-catchers, or

D

such



*The Art of Cross-biting.*

such of the like fraternitie. These when their other trades fail as the Cheater, when he hath no cosen to grime with his stop vice, or the high Lawier, when he hath no set match to ride about, and the skip when there is no terme, faire, nor time of great assemblie, then to maintaine the maine chance, they vse the benefit of their wiuues or friendes, to the cross-biting of such as lust after their filthie enoymities: some simple men are drawn on by subtill meanes, which neuer intended such a bad matter.

In sommer evening, and in the winter nights, these traffikes (these common trulls (I meane) walke abroad either in the fields or streets, that are commonly haunted, as skales to draw men into hell, and a farre of, as attending applesquires, certaine cross-biters stand aloofe, as if they knew them not: now so many men so many affections. Some vnruly mates that place their content in lust, letting slip the libertie of their eyes on their painted faces, fixe upon their vncleane beauties, till their hearts be set on fire: then come they to these minions, and court them with many sweet words: alas their loves need no long sales, so they are forthwith entertained, and either they go to the Tauerne to scale by the match, with a pottle of Spectras, or straight he carries him to some bad place, and there picks his pocket, or else the cross-biters comes swearing in, and so out-face the dismayed companion, that rather then he would be brought in question, he would disburse all that he hath present. But this is but an easie cooingage. Some other mating with one of that profession in the street, with question if she will drinke with him a pint of wine, their trade is neuer to refuse, and if so manners they doe, it is but once, and then scarce shall they be warme in y<sup>e</sup> roome, but in comes a terrible fellow, with a shag haire & a searefull beard, as though he were one of *Polphemus* cut, and he comes scowling in, and saith, what hast thou to doe bafe knave, to carry my sister or my wife to the tauerne: by his cluues you whoze, tis some of your companions, I wil haue you

*The Art of Cross-biting.*

you both before the Justice, Deputy or Constable, to be examined. The poore servingman, apprentice, farmer, or whatsoeuer he is, seeing such a terrible huffe smite, standing with his dagger in his hand, is fearfull both of him, and to be brought in trouble, and therefore speaks kindly and courteously vnto him, and desires him to be content, he meant no harm. The whoore, that hath feares at command, saies a weeping, and cries him mercy, At this submission of them both, he triumphs like a hoggart, and will take no compassion: yet at last, through intreaty of other his companions comming in as strangers, hee is pacified with some forty shillings, and the poore man goes sorrowful away, sighing out that which Salomon hath in his psalme, *A shameles woman hath liues in her lips, for her spote is as sweet as honey, her throat as soft as oyle, but the end of her is more bitter then Aloes, and her tongue is more sharpe then a two edged sword, her feet goe vnto death, and her steeppes leade vnto hell.*

Again, these trulls when they haue got in a noyce, then straight they pick his purse, and then haue they their cross-bifers ready, to whom they crosse the money, and so offer themselves to be searcht: but the poore man is so out faced by these cross-biting ruffians, that he is glad to goe away content with his losse, yet are these easy practises. At night the Iustices send out spies in the night, they shold see how these street walkers wil let in rich garded gowns, quaint periwigs, ruffs of the largest size, quarter and halfe deep, glozied richly with blew starch, their cheekes died with sorfuling water, & thus are they trickt vp, & either walk like stales by and down the streets, or els stande like the deuils *Sigms* at a tauerne or alchouise, as if who should say, if any be so minded to satisfie his filthy lust, to lende me his purse, and the deuil his soule, let him come in and be welcome. Now fir comes by a countrey farmer, walking from his inne to performe some business, & seeing such a gorgeous damzel, he wondering at such a braue wench, stands

*The Art of Croſſ-biting.*

ſtands ſtaring her on the face, or perhaps both but caſt a glance, & bid her good ſpeed, as plain ſimple ſwains haue their luſting humors as wel as others: the ſtraiſt ſtraight beginning her *exordium* with a ſmile, ſaith: how now my friend, what want you, would you ſpeake with any bodie here? If the ſelow hath any bold ſpirit, perhaps he wil offer the wine, and then he is caught, tis enough: in he goes and they are chamberd: then ſends the ſor her husband, or her friend, and there either the farmers pocket is ſtripd, or els the croſ-biters ſal upon him, and thyeaten him with bydetwel and the law: then ſor feare he geues them all in his purſe, and makes them ſome bil to pay a ſumme of money at a certain day.

If the pooꝛ Farmer be baſhful, & paſſeth by one of theſe ſhameles ſtripets, then wil the verſe it with him, & claime acquaintance of him, and by ſome policy or other ſal aboard on him, & cary him into ſome houſe or other: if hee but enter in at doores with her (thogh the pooꝛ farmer neuer kiſſ her) yet then the croſ-biters like vultures, wil pray upon his purſe, and rob him of euery peny. If there be any yong gentlema that is a nonde and hath not ſeen their trains, to him wil ſome common filth (that neuer knew loue,) feigne an ardent and honeſt affection, til the and his croſ-biters haue verſt him to the beggers eſtate.

Alth gentlemen, marchants, yeomen, and farmers, let this to you al, and to euery degree els, be a caueat to warn you from luſt, that your inordinat deſire be not a mean to impoveriſh your purſes, diſcredit your good names, condemne your ſoules, but alſo that your welth got with the ſweat of your browes, or left by your parents as a patrimony, ſhal be a pray to thoſe coſening croſ-biters. ſome ſonh men are ſo far in with theſe deteſtable frogs, that they ſtumble what they haue upon them, and find nothing but a *neaphtan* fauour ſor their laboꝛ. Read the vii. of *Salomons proverbs*, and there at large betw the deſcription of a ſhameles and impudent curtizan: yet is there another kind of croſ-biting

*The Art of Croff-biting.*

biting, which is most pestilent, and thus this. Ther liues about this town certain householders, yet mere Whistlers and coseners, who learning some insight in the civil lawe, walke ab;oad like paratoys, sumners, and infoymers, being none at al either in office or credit, and they go spieng about where any marchant, or marchants pientise, citizen, welthy farmer, or other of good credit, ether accompanie with any woman familiarly, or els hath gotten some mayd with child, as mens natures be prone to sin, straight they come ouer his shallders thus, they sende for hym to a tawern, and there open the matter vnto him, which they haue cunningly learned out, telling him he must be presented to the Arches, and the scitation shalbe peremptorie he serued in his parish church. The partie afraid to haue his credit crackt with the worshipful of the citie, and the rest of his neighbors, and grieuing highly his wife should heare of it, straight takes composition with this cosener for some xx. marke, nay I heard of lx. pound crof-bitten at one time, and then the cooling infoymer or crof-biter promiseth to wipe him out of the court, and discharge him from the matter, when it was neither knowne nor presented: so go they to the woman, and fetch her off if she be married, and though they haue this grosse summe, yet oft times they crof-bite her for moze: nay thus doe they feare citizens, pientices and farmers, that they finde but ane way suspicious of the like fault. These crof-biting hands, for no better I can terme them, in that for lucre they conueale the sinne, and smother by lust, doe not onely enrich themselves mightely thereby, but also discredit, hinder, and p̄iudice the Courte of the Arches, and the Officers belonging to the same. There are some pozeblinde patches of that facultie, that haue their Tenements purchased, and their plate on their boord very solemnly, who onely get this gaine by crof-biting, as is afoze reherced. But leaving them to the deep insight of such as be appointed with iustice to correct vice, again to the crue of my for-

*The Art of Cross-biting.*

mer crof-biters, whose life simple to line vpon, is nothing but the folowing of common, dishonest and idle trils, and therby maintain themselves byane, and the scrumpets in handfom furniture. And to end this art with an English demonstration, ile tel you a pretty tale of late perfozmd in bishopsgate street: there was there fine trafficques pretty, but common buswines, that stood fast by a tauern doze, looking if some play would passe by for their purpose, anone the eldest of them, and most experienced in that law, named *M. B.* spied a master of a ship coming along: here is a simpler quoth she, Ile verse him, or hang me. Sir, said she, god euen, what are you so liberal as to bestow on theese good wenches that are by, a pint of wine, In saith, saye women, qd. he, I was neuer niggard for so much, and with that he takes one of them by the hand, and caries them al into the tauern, there he bestowed cheare and ipocras vpon them, drinking hard til the shot came to a noble, so that they ill. carousing to the gentleman, made him somewhat tipsie, & then *Et vnnus in vniuersis, ignis in igne fuit.* Well, night grew on, and hee would away, but this mistres *M. B.* stopt his iorney thus, gentleman, qd. she, this undeserued fauor of yours makes vs so deeply beholding to you, that our ability is not able any way to make sufficient satisfaction, yet to shew vs kind in what we can, you shal not deny me this request, to see my simple house before you go. The gentleman a litle whittled, consented and went with them, so the shot was paid, & away they go: Without the tauern doze stood two of their husbands, *L. B.* and *J. M.* and they were made priny to the practise. Home goes the gentleman with these iolly buswines scrambling, & at last he was welcom to *M. B.* s house, and one of the three went into a chamber, and got to bed, whose name was *A. B.* after they had chatted a while, the gentleman would haue ben gone, but she told him that before he went, he should see al the roomes of her house, and so ledde him by into the chamber where the party lay in bed: who is here said the  
Gen,

*The Art of Cross-biting.*

Gentleman. Marie saith Hal, a good pretie wench sir, and if you be not wel, lie downe by her, you can take no harm of her: Dionkennes desires lust, and so the Gentleman begins to dally, and a waie goes she with the candle, and at last he put off his clothes and went to bed: yet he was not so Dionke, but he could after a while remember his money, and feeling for his purse all was gone, and three linkes of his whistle broken off: the sum that was in his purse was in gold and silver twentie nobles. And thus he was in a maze, though his head were well laden, in comes I. B. the good man of the house, and two other with him, and speaking somewhat loud, peace husband quoth she, there is one in bed, speak not so loud. In bed, saith he, gogs nowns Ile go see, and so will I saith the other: you shall not saith his wife, and stroue against him, but vp goes he and his cross-biters with him, & seeing the Gentleman in bed, out with his dagger, and asked what base vilaine it was that there sought to dishonest his wife: well, he sent one of them for a constable, and made the gentleman rise, who half Dionk yet had that remembrance to speake faire, and to intreate him to keepe his credit: but no intreatie could serue, but so the counter he must, and the constable must be sent for: yet at last one of the intreated that the gentleman might be honestly vied, and carried to a Tauerne to talke of the matter, till a Constable came. Ent, saith I. B. I will haue law vpon him. But the base cross-biter at last stoopt, and to the Tauerne they goe, where the Gentleman laide his whistle to payne for monie, and there bestowed as much of them as came to ten shillings, and sate drinking and talking vntill the next morrow. By that the Gentleman had stoune a nap, and waking, it was day light, and then seeing himselfe compassed with these cross-biters, and remembering his nights worke, soberly smiling, asked the if they knew what he was: they answered, not wel. Why then, quoth he, you base cosing rogues, you shall ere we part: and with that drawing his sword, kept the into the chamber, desiring that the constable might be sent for: but



*The Art of Croſſ-biting*

this bꝛane of his coulde not diſmaie *Ph. Mall*, foꝛ the he had  
bidden a ſharper bꝛunt befoꝛe, witnes the time of his mar-  
tirdome, wbe vpon her ſhoulders was ingrauen, the hiſto-  
rie of her wboꝛiſh qualities: but ſhe replying ſwoꝛe, ſeeing  
he was ſo luſtie, her huſband ſhoulde not put it vp by no  
meanes. I will tell the: thou baſe croſſ-biting band, quoth  
he, and you cooſning companions, I ſerue a noble man, &  
foꝛ my credit with him. I refer me to the penaltie he will  
impoſe on you, foꝛ by God I will make you an example to  
all croſſ-biters ere I end with you. I tell you villaines, I  
ſerue, and with that he namde his Lord. When the guilty  
whores and coſners heard of his credit and ſeruiſe, they  
began humbly to intreat him to be good to the: then quoth  
he, firſt deliuer me my monie, they vpon that gladly gaue  
him all, and reſtoꝛed the linkes of his chaine. When hee  
had all, he ſmiled, and ſware afreſh, that he would torment  
them foꝛ all this, that the ſeueritie of their puniſhment  
might be a caueat to others to beware of the like cooſ-  
nage: and vpon that knockt with his foote, and ſayd he  
would let them go till he had a Conſtable. When in gene-  
rall they humbled themſelues, and ſo recompenced the par-  
tie, that he agreed to paſſe ouer the matter, conditionally  
beſide, that they would pale the ſixtene ſhillings hee had  
ſpent in charges, which they alſo performed. The Gen-  
tleman ſlept his waie & ſaid, you may ſee the old pꝛouerbe  
fulfilled, *Fallere fallentem non eſt fraus*, but the poꝛe croſſbi-  
ters ſate ſighing a ſozowfull heigh bo. Thus haue I de-  
cꝛyphered an obious pꝛactiſe not woꝛthie to be named: and  
now wiſhing all of what eſtate ſomer, to beware of ſilthy  
luſt, and ſuch damnable ſta'es as byawes men on to diſ-  
oꝛdinate deſires, and rather to ſpend their coine amongſt  
honeſt companie, then to bequeath it to ſuch baſe croſſ-bi-  
ters, as pꝛaie vpon men, like rauens vpon dead carcasses,  
I end with this pꝛaier, that Croſſ-biting and Conny-cat-  
ching may be as little known in England, as the eating  
of ſwines fleſh was amongſt the Iewes. Farewell.

*Nāſcimur pro patria.*

FINIS.



A PLEASANT DISCOVERY OF  
the Coofenage of Colliers.

**A**Lthough (courteous Reader) I did not put in amongst the lawes of cosening, the law of *legering*, which is a deceit that Colliers abuse the common-welth withall, in hauing vnlawfull sackes, yet take it for a pettie kinde of craft or mysterie, as prejudiciall to the poore, as any of the other two: for I omitted diuers other diuelish vices, as, the nature of the *Lift*, the *Black art*, & the *Curbing law*, which is the Filchers & theeues that come into houses or shops, and lift away any thing, or pick-locks, or hookers at windowes, although they be as *species* and branches to the table before rehearsed. But omitting them, again to our law of *legering*. Know therfore, that there be inhabiting in and about *London*, certain caterpillers (colliers I should say) that doe terme themselves (amongst themselves) by the name of *legers*, who for that the honorable, the L. Maior of the citie of *London*, and his officers, look straitly to the measuring of coales, doe (to preuent the execution of his iustice) plant themselves in & about the suburbs of *London*, as *Shorditch*, *White-chappell*, *Southwarke*, and such places, and there they haue a house, or yard, that hath a back gate, because it is the more conuenient for their cosening purpose, and the reason is this; the *leger*, the crafty collier I meane, riseth very earlie in the morning, and either goeth towards *Croyden*, *Whetstone*, *Greenwich*, or *Romford*, and there meteth with cuntry colliers, who bring coles to serue the marktete: there, in a forestalling manner, this *leger* bargaineth

E

with.

*A Plaine Discoverie*

with the cuntry Collier for his coales, and payeth for them nineteene shillings, or twentie at the most, but commonly fifteene and sixteene, and there is in the load 36. sackes: so that they paie for euerie couple about 14. pence. Now hauing bought his coales, euerie sacke containing full foure bushels: he carieth the Country Collier home to his legering place, and there at the backe gate causeth him to vnlod, and as they saie, shoote the coales downe. As soone as the cuntry Collier hath dispacht and is gone, then the Legier who hath three or four hired men vnder him bringeth forth his owne sackes, which be long & narrow, holding at the most not three bushells, so that they gaine in the change of euerie sacke a bushel for their pains. Tush, yet this were somewhat to be borne withall, although the gaine & vsurie is monstrous, but this sufficeth not, for they fil not these sacks ful by far, but put into them some 2. bushels & a halfe, laying in the mouth of the sacke certaine great choice coales, which they call fillers, to make the sack shew faire, although al the rest be smal willow coale, & halfe dros. When they haue thus not filled their sacks, but thrust coales into the, that which they lay vppermost is best filled, for to make the greater shew: then a tall sturdy knaue that is al ragd, & durty on his legs, as thogh he came out of the cuntry (for they durtie their hose & shoos vpon purpose to make themselues seem cuntry colliers:) Thus with two sacks a pece, they either go out at the back gate, or steale out at the street side, and so go vp and downe the suburbs, and sell theyr coales in summer for 14. & 16. pence a couple, and in winter for 18. or 20. The poore cookes and other citizens that buy them, thinke they be cuntry colliers that

*of the coofnage of Colliers.*

that haue left some coals of their load, & would gladly haue monie, fupposing (as the Statute is) they bee good and lawfull fackes, are thus coofned by the Legers, and haue but two bufhells and a halfe for foure bufhells, & yet are extreemly rackt in the price, which is not onely a great hinderance to her Maiefties poore commons, but greatly preiudiciall to the mafter colliers, that bring true fackes & meafure out of the cuntry. Then confider (gentle readers) what a kinde of coofnage thefe legiers vse, that can make of 30. fackes fome 56. which I haue feene with mine eies, for I haue fet downe with my pen how many turnes they haue made of a load, and they made 28. turnes, euery turne being two facks: fo that they haue gotten an intollerable gains by their falfe meafure. I could not be filent feeing this abufe, but thoght to reueale it for my countries commoditie, and to giue light to the worshipfull Iuftices, and other her Maiefties officers in Middlefex, Surrey, & els where, to looke to fuch a groffe coofnage, as contrarie to a direct statute, doth defraud, and impouerish her Maiefties poore commons. Well may the honorable and worshipfull of London flourifh, who carefully looke to the country coales, and if they finde not foure bufhells in euery facke, do sell them to the poore as forfeit, and distribute the monie to them that haue need, burning the facke, and honoring or rather dishonoring the pillorie with the colliers durty faces: & well may the honorable & worshipful of the fuburbs liue & prosper, if they looke in iuftice to thefe legers, who deferue more punifhment then the statute appoints for them which is whipping at a carts tail, or with fauour the pillorie.

*A plaine Discouerie*

For fewell or fiering being a thing necessarie in a common-welth, and charcole vsed more then any other, the poore, not able to buy by the load, are faine to get in their fire by the sack, and so are greatly cosened by the retails. Seeing therefore the carefull lawes her Maiesty hath appointed for the wealth of her Commons, and succor of the poore, I would humbly entreat all her Maiesties officers, to look into the life of these *legers*, and to root them out, that the poor feele not the burden of their inconstionable gaines. I herd with my cares a poor woman of *Shorditch* who had bought coles of a *leger*, with weping teares cōplaine and rayle against him in the street, in her rough eloquence calling him cosening knaue, & saying, tis no maruel villain (quoth she) if men compare you colliers to the deuil, seeing your consciences are worser then the deuils; for hee takes none but those soules whom God hates: and you vndoe the poore whom God loues.

What is the matter good wife (quoth I) that you vse such inuectiue words against the collier: a collier sir (sath she) hee is a theefe, and a robber of the common people. Ile tell you sir, I bought of a countrey collier two sacks for thirteen pence, and I bought of this knaue three sacks which cost me two & twentie pence: and sir, when I measured both their sacks, I had more in the two sacks by three pecks, then I had in his three. I would (quoth she) the Iustices woulde looke into this abuse, and that my neighbors would ioine with me in a supplication, & by God I woulde kneele before the Queene, & entreat that such cosening colliers might not onely be punished with the bare

*of the cofenage of Colliers.*

bare pillerie, (for they haue fuch black faces, that no man knowes them againe, and fo are they carelefle,) but that they might leaue their eares behinde them for a forfet: and if that would not mende them, that Bull with a faire halter might roote them out of the world, that liue in the world by fuch groffe & difhoneft cofenage. The collier hearing this, went fmiling away, becaufe he knew his life was not lookt into: & the womã wept for anger that ſhe had not ſome one by, that might with iuſtice reuenge her quarrel.

There be alſo certaine colliers that bring coles to London by water in barges, and they be called *gripers*; to theſe comes the *leger* and bargaines with him for his coles, and ſels by retayl with the like cofenage of ſacks as I rehearſed before. But theſe mad *legers* (not content with this monſtrous gaine) do beſides mixe among their other ſacks of coles, ſtore of ſhruffe duſt and ſmall cole, to their great aduantage.

And for prooſe hereof I will recite you a matter of truth, lately performed by a Cookes wife vpon a cofening collier.

*How a Cookes wife in London did lately ſerue a Collier for his cofenage.*

**I**T chanced this ſummer that a loade of coles came forth of Kent to *Bilingsgate*, and a *leger* bought theſe, who thinking to deceiue the Citizens, as he did thoſe in the Suburbs, furniſht himſelf with a couple of ſacks, and comes vp *S. Mary hill* to ſel theſe: a cookes wife bargained with the collier for his coles, and they agreed vpon fourteen pence for the couple: which done, he caried in the coles, & ſhot them: and when

*A plaine Discoverie*

the wife saw them, and perceiuing there was scarce  
fiue bushels for eight, she calls a little girle to her, and  
bade her go for the Constable: for thou coolening  
rogue, quoth shee, (speaking to the Collier) I will  
teach thee how thou shalt cosen me with thy false  
sacks, whatsoeuer thou doest to others, and I will  
haue thee before my L. Mayor, with that she caught  
a spit in her hand, and swore if he offered to stir, shee  
would therewith broach him: at which worde the  
collier was amazed, and the feare of the pillerie put  
him in such a fright, that he said he would goe to his  
bote, and returne againe to answer whatsoeuer shee  
durst obiect against him, & for pledge therof (quoth  
the collier) keep my sacks, your mony, and the coles  
also. Whereupon the woman let him go: but as  
soon as the collier was out of dores, it was needlesse  
to bid him run, for down he gets to his bote, & away  
he thrusts from Billingsgate, and so immediatly went  
down to Wapping, and neuer after durst returne to  
the Cookes wife to demaund either mony, sacks, or  
coales.

*How a flax wife and her neighbors used a  
coolening Collier.*

**N**ow Gentlemen by your leave, and heare a merry iest:  
There was in the Suburbs of London, a Flax-wife,  
that wanted coles, and seeing a legger come by with  
a couple of sacks, that had before deceiued her in like sorte,  
cheeped, bargained and bought them, and so went in with her  
to shoot them in her colehouse. As soone as she saw her coles,  
she easilie gess there was scarce six bushelles, yet dissembling  
the matter, she paid him for the, & bad him bring her two  
sacks



of the cosenage of Colliars.

sacks more: the collier went his way, and in the meane time the flax-wife measured the coles, and there was iust fine bushels and a peck. Hereupon she cald in her neighbors, being a companie of women that before time had also been pinched in their coles, and shewed them the cosenage, & desired their aide to her in tormenting the colliar, which they promist to perform, and thus it fell out. Se conueyd them into a back room (some xvi. of the) euery one hauing a good cudgell vnder her apron, straight comes the colliar and saith, Mistres, here be your coles: welcome good colliar, quoth she, I pray thee follow me into the backside, and shute them in another room. The colliar was content, & went with hir, but as soon as he was in, the goodwife lockt the dore. & the colliar seying such a troupe of wiues in the room, was amaz'd, yet said, God speed you all shrewes, welcome quoth one iolly Dame, being appointed by them all to giue sentence against him: who so soon as the colliar had shot his sacks, said, sirra colliar, know that we are here all assembled as a grand iury, to determine of thy villanies, for setting vs false sacks of coles, and know that thou art here indited vpon cosenage, therefore hold vp thy hand at the bar, and cyther say guilty, or not guilty, and by whom thou wilt be tryed, for thou must receiue condign punishment for the same ere thou depart. The colliar who thought they had but iested, smiled & said, Come on, which of you all shall be my Iudge. Marry sir, quoth one iolly dame, that is I, and by God you knaue, you shall find I will pronouce sentence against you seuerely if you be found guilty. Whē the Colliar saw they were in earnest, he said, Come, come, open the dore and let me go, with that five or six wiues started vp and fell vpon the Colliar, and gaue vnto him halfe a score of sound lambeakes with their cudgels, and bad him speak more reuerently to their Principall.

The

F 13

A plaine Dilcouerie.

The collier feeling it smart, was afraid, and thought mirth & curtesie would be the best mean to make amendes for his villany, & therfore said he would be tried by the verdict of the smock. Vpon this they panneld a iury, and the flax-wife gaue euidence, and because this vnaccustomed iury requir'd witnes, she measured the coles before the colliers face, vppon which he was found guilty, & she that sat as principal to giue iudgement vpon him, began as followeth.

Collier, thou art condemned here by prooffe, of flat cofenage, and I am now appointed in conscience to geue sentence against thee, being not only moued therunto because of this poor woman, but also for the general commodity of my country, and therfore this is my sentence: we haue no pillery for thee, nor cart to whip thee as, but here I do awaie that thou shalt haue as many bastinados as thy bones wil beare, and then to be turned out of dores without sacks or mony. This sentence being pronounced, she rose vp, and gaue no respite of time for th'execution, but according to the sentence before expressed, al the womē fell vpon him, beating him extremely, among whom he lent some lusty buffets. But might ouercoms right, and therfore Ne Hercules contra duos. The women so crust him, that he was not able to lift his hands to his head, & so with a broken pate or two, he was paid, and like iack Drum, saire and orderly thrust out of dores.

This was the reward that the Colliar had, and I pray God all such colliars be so serued, and that good wines when they buy such sacks, may giue them such paymenis, and that the honorable and worshipfull of the land, may look into this gros abuse of Colliars, as well for charity sake, as also for the benefit of the poor: and so wishing Colliars to amend their deceitfull and disordred dealings herein, I end.

F I N I S.

*Collier's life*  
*1711*